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Security Council

Fifty-ninth year

Provisional

5005th meeting

Friday, 16 July 2004, 10 a.m.

New York

President:	Mr. Motoc	(Romania)
Members:	Algeria	Mr. Baali
	Angola	Mr. Gaspar Martins
	Benin	Mr. Adechi
	Brazil	Mr. Valle
	Chile	Mr. Muñoz
	China	Mr. Zhang Yishan
	France	Mr. De La Sablière
	Germany	Mr. Much
	Pakistan	Mr. Mahmood
	Philippines	Mr. Baja
	Russian Federation	Mr. Konuzin
	Spain	Mr. Oyarzun
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Sir Emyr Jones Parry
	United States of America	Mr. Siv

Agenda

Security Council mission

Report of the Security Council mission to West Africa from 20 to 29 June 2004 (S/2004/525)

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04-42851 (E)

The meeting was called to order at 10.20 a.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

Security Council mission

Report of the Security Council mission to West Africa from 20 to 29 June 2004 (S/2004/525)

The President: I should like to inform the Council that I have received letters from the representatives of Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana, Guinea, Japan, Liberia, the Netherlands, Nigeria and Sierra Leone in which they request to be invited to participate in the discussion of the item on the Council's agenda. In conformity with the usual practice, I propose, with the consent of the Council, to invite those representatives to participate in the discussion, without the right to vote, in accordance with the relevant provisions of the Charter and rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure.

There being no objection, it is so decided.

At the invitation of the President, Mr. Djangoné-Bi (Côte d'Ivoire), Nana Effah-Apenteng (Ghana), Mr. Sow (Guinea), Mr. Haraguchi (Japan), Mr. Kawah (Liberia), Mr. Van den Berg (Netherlands), Mr. Adekanye (Nigeria) and Mr. Pemagbi (Sierra Leone) took the seats reserved for them at the side of the Council Chamber.

The President: In accordance with the understanding reached in the Council's prior consultations, I shall take it that the Security Council agrees to extend an invitation under rule 39 of its provisional rules of procedure to Mr. Dumisani Kumalo, Chairman of the Economic and Social Council Ad Hoc Advisory Group on Guinea-Bissau.

It is so decided.

I invite the Chairman of the Economic and Social Council Ad Hoc Advisory Group on Guinea-Bissau to take the seat reserved for him at the side of the Council Chamber.

The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda. The Security Council is meeting in accordance with the understanding reached in its prior consultations.

Members of the Council have before them document S/2004/525, which contains the report of the Security Council mission to West Africa, 20-29 June 2004.

I should now like to give the floor to the representative of the United Kingdom, Sir Emyr Jones Parry, in his capacity as head of the Security Council mission to West Africa.

Sir Emyr Jones Parry (United Kingdom): My colleagues have got the written report. I think they have seen the record of the oral report which was made to the Council immediately after the visit, so I will not resume either of those. I shall take them as a basis which everybody has before them.

May I begin by thanking the countries of the region — seven countries in eight days — for all the help they gave to the mission, to the United Nations teams on the ground in all their manifestations, to the colleagues who were on the mission and to the Secretariat, which made it all possible.

In terms of the visit, our intention was very clear: to underline the Security Council's continuing interest in and support and concern for developments in West Africa and, more generally, that of the United Nations as a whole. We also wished to set our approach in a regional context, being very clear that there are many issues which affect most of the countries in one way or another and that there is a natural knock-on effect as one tackles an issue in one country but it then passes across to have a consequence for a neighbour. There is thus an absolutely imperative need to take account of the regional dimension, and we tried to do that. That was why the discussions with the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and our support for ECOWAS were actually so important.

As recommended, and as indeed the non-governmental organizations had suggested earlier, we took up lots of horizontal issues — such as child soldiers, peace-building, governance, small arms proliferation and so on — on a regular basis, as opportunity arose. They may not be specifically referred to in the report, but they were part of the context at all stages.

We, of course, were impressed by the United Nations effort on the ground. Anyone who cynically wonders whether this Organization is relevant ought to go on the same visit that we went on. In their different

manifestations, the Members of the United Nations family are doing a great job, and doing it with sensitivity, we thought, and in cooperation with local Governments, working primarily as enablers to permit Governments to better fulfil that which they wish to do and to encourage a durable independence of action by Governments. The international community should have a clear strategy for reducing dependency and actually helping countries to fulfil their very real potential.

The conclusions which we came to, I think, are straightforwardly set out in the report, but they do include a clear commitment that the United Nations and the Security Council have to stay the course in terms of their support for positive developments in West Africa and of the need to tackle those issues regionally, to give our support to the good things and to try and help Governments to tackle those issues which are the problems. That includes managing post-conflict situations, which are particularly difficult in the sense of building peace and durable institutions, creating the rule of law and having conditions of economic development which both harness the resources of countries and offer a prospect, especially to young people, of meeting expectations.

Disarmament, demobilization and reintegration are classically important throughout the region; and if disarmament and demobilization are difficult, reintegration is much more so, it seems to me. Reintegration must provide opportunities; otherwise, idle hands make mischief. It is a simple lesson. There is also a quite basic need to bring policies to bear which will actually avoid a resurgence of conflict.

To do all that, we need coherent approaches by the international community, by the international financial institutions, by all the organs of the United Nations and by donors. We must do so across the spectrum of intervention — and by "intervention" what I am talking about are the policies one needs to discourage and prevent conflict right through to what one does post-conflict to promote the rule of law, economic development and so on. That spectrum of activity, by the United Nations Children's Fund, the United Nations Development Programme and all the others involved, should be undertaken in a fashion which meets the aims of countries and provides the sort of future which West Africa deserves and which its assets, its people and its resources should permit it to actually achieve.

That is a quick summary, a snapshot — and by definition it can only be a snapshot. I think my regret, which I believe is the same as that of most other members of the mission, is that we went and had an awful number of meetings, but we did not see as much in-country of activities as we would have liked. But that was the schedule.

The President: I now invite the representative of Côte d'Ivoire to take a seat at the Council and table to make his statement.

Mr. Djangoné-Bi (Côte d'Ivoire) (*spoke in French*): My delegation congratulates you, Sir, on your accession to the presidency of the Council and commends your initiative of holding this public debate, in particular with the participation of the countries that were visited. We convey our deep gratitude to all members of the Council for their concern for West Africa in particular and, in general, for their devotion to restoring peace, political stability and the optimal conditions for integrated, united and sustainable development in that ravaged part of the world.

We would ask you, Sir, to convey our gratitude to all the members of the recent Security Council mission to West Africa, and in particular to Sir Emyr Jones Parry, who led the mission very successfully, as is reflected in the high quality of the report before the Council.

My delegation commends the ongoing concern and sustained endeavours of the Council to promote the close link between security and development in West Africa, good governance, respect for international humanitarian law and human rights, and an active, coherent and multilateral approach to conflict prevention.

We therefore welcome the relevant and comprehensive observations and recommendations contained in the report of the Security Council mission to West Africa (S/2004/525). In particular, we welcome its call for a progress report by the end of this year on the implementation of the recommendations set out in the report of the Secretary-General (S/2004/200) on ways to combat subregional and cross-border problems in West Africa. We have no doubt that the report will be regularly updated, reflecting what has already been described as the sustained nature of that active approach to conflict prevention in West Africa, and in order to ensure the good conduct of the States that

produce and supply weapons, ammunition and explosives.

With respect to my country, the Republic of Côte d'Ivoire, I am pleased to note that since the visit of the Security Council mission, as the President of the Republic had undertaken, the status-of-forces agreement has been signed and national regulatory procedures for establishing and operating radio and television stations are being monitored by the United Nations Operation in Côte d'Ivoire (UNOCI). Moreover, as the President of the Republic stated, Parliament has resumed consideration of the draft laws submitted by the Government. It is understood that the work of Parliament will continue, in special session if necessary, until the final text adopted by the Council of Ministers is considered. We will then have to resolve the question of those bills that the Government has not been able to consider because the ministers concerned have not submitted them to the Government. That is the case with the law on the media and the decree on war victims. Of course, the Parliament will consider those texts in the spirit of the Linas-Marcoussis and Accra II Agreements, but in full sovereignty and according to its own rules of procedure, which respect democratic principles.

My delegation welcomes with relief the fact that the international Commission of Inquiry for Côte d'Ivoire on human rights violations since September 2002 has been established and will soon be operational. However, we suggest that, to take advantage of the period of the inquiry, the Commission should be authorized to investigate crimes committed beyond the date of 24 January 2003, the current end date of its reporting panel, which is the date of the signing of the Linas-Marcoussis Agreement. In fact, human rights violations were perpetrated in certain parts of the country after that date: at Guézon and Bléninminhouin on 24 and 26 June 2003, at Kahen on 11 July and 9 December 2003, at Zou and Pinhoun on 21 November 2003, at Brodoumé on 3 and 4 March 2004, at Abidjan from 25 to 27 March 2004, at Ity and Gohitafla on 7 and 8 June 2004, and at Bouaké, Boundiali, Korhogo and Séguéla during the week of 21 June 2004, at the very time when the Security Council mission was in Abidjan. In fact, it would be difficult to understand how the Commission of Inquiry could turn a blind eye to violations committed in same conflict, in the same territory, because they fall outside its mandate.

The true perpetrators of those violations of the fundamental rights of Ivorians and residents in Côte d'Ivoire must be identified so that justice can be done for the people, the nation and the State of Côte d'Ivoire, with equity and on the basis of established proof, instead of on the basis of the assumptions and the conjectures made by those previously responsible for inquiry, who spent less than a dozen days in Côte d'Ivoire despite the gravity of their mission.

I wish to conclude by commenting on a key passage of the mission report under consideration. Paragraph 18 of the report refers to the commitment of the Ivorian authorities to adopt all texts envisaged by the Linas-Marcoussis Agreement by 28 July 2004:

> "[President Gbagbo] indicated, however, that, as provided for by the constitution of Côte d'Ivoire, the submission of the draft law on article 35 on the question of eligibility would take place only after the national territory had been reunified, meaning after completion of the disarmament, demobilization, rehabilitation and reintegration programme and the restoration of State authority throughout the country. The mission challenged this assertion and, indeed, on many occasions during its visit, expressed its regret at the lack of trust between the parties, which had led them to put preconditions on the implementation of key elements of the Linas-Marcoussis Agreement." (*S/2004/525, para. 18*)

That challenge to the commitment of the President of the Republic to respect the Constitution is all the more surprising as it comes from a mission of the Security Council, which has always rightly urged respect for legality and the rule of law. The necessity of not holding elections so long as the territorial integrity of the country is in jeopardy is not a precondition but a constitutional clause accepted by the people of Côte d'Ivoire. Above and beyond respect for constitutional legality, how, from a practical standpoint, can one hold a referendum and carry out a campaign in complete freedom when former rebel groups are still taking up arms and preventing free access to the northern half of the country?

In that regard, my delegation welcomes the recent appeal for the respect of constitutions made by the Secretary-General, Mr. Kofi Annan, before the African Union.

My delegation once again thanks the Security Council, the Secretariat and the international community for their steady support for the restoration of peace, security and stability and the conditions needed for sustainable development in West Africa, which is considered a homogeneous zone for integrated and united development.

The President: I thank the representative of Côte d'Ivoire for the kind words he addressed to me.

The next speaker inscribed on my list is the representative of Ghana. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Effah-Apenteng (Ghana): At the outset, Sir, allow me to congratulate you on your assumption of the presidency of the Security Council for the month of July. It is the hope of the States members of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) that you will continue to bring the wealth of your experience and knowledge to bear in steering the affairs of the Council during your tenure.

The recent Security Council mission to seven countries in West Africa is yet another manifestation of the support and concern of the Council for matters concerning our region. It lends further credence to the view that the concerted and dedicated efforts of the international community and the United Nations in peace operations and the provision of development assistance to the region represent a viable prospect of West Africa breaking out of the cycle of conflict and poverty in order to achieve sustainable peace and development.

ECOWAS is gratified to note the Council mission's observation relating to the general significant progress in peace-building efforts in the region.

The sustained post-conflict peace-consolidation process in Sierra Leone, in spite of continuing challenges, is very much welcome. Although the situation in Sierra Leone has improved considerably, ECOWAS is still convinced of the need to keep a residual United Nations force in the country in order to consolidate peace, enhance security and pursue ongoing capacity-building programmes. After renewed calls by ECOWAS heads of State or Government and the recommendations of the twenty-first report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone (UNAMSIL) (S/2004/228), the Security Council, in resolution 1537 (2004), extended the mandate of UNAMSIL until 30 September 2004. It also decided to keep a residual force in the country with effect from 1 January 2005, for an initial period of six months. The issue of the continued retention of a residual force to consolidate gains merits the appropriate attention. We are of the opinion that the United Nations mandate should not come to an end until all outstanding issues, including the Special Court, have been thrashed out.

As is generally known, youth unemployment is especially grave in countries coming out of conflict. Sierra Leone, therefore, needs the assistance of the international community to enable it to provide jobs for the young people who have completed the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration (DDR) programme. The absence of jobs for such young people seriously jeopardizes efforts to consolidate peace in the country.

We further concur with the mission's recommendation that donors, particularly those who are yet to do so, should make the necessary effort to contribute to support the Special Court for Sierra Leone. Such continued support from the international community is needed to enable the State authority of that sister country to effectively assume full responsibility for national security by contributing to the restructuring and strengthening of the security sector, even as the UNAMSIL adjustment, drawdown and withdrawal plan takes its course.

On Guinea-Bissau, due notice has been taken of the mission's recommendation that ECOWAS should include that country in its regional policies of containing the proliferation of small arms and other security threats in the region. In this regard, it should be noted that heads of State and Government of ECOWAS, at a meeting held in Abuja in March 2003, adopted a declaration on a regional approach to peace and security in which they reaffirmed their commitment to abide by the ECOWAS Moratorium on the Importation, Exportation and Manufacture of Small Arms and Light Weapons. They also, inter alia, adopted a code of conduct for the implementation of the Moratorium and the Protocol Relating to the Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management, Resolution, Peacekeeping and Security. To date, the implementation of the ECOWAS Moratorium has made considerable advance, even though a lot still remains to be accomplished.

With presidential elections scheduled to take place in a year's time, the international community should continue its support for efforts to promote democratic rule in Guinea-Bissau. Also, the country continues to experience serious problems of payment arrears and faces the challenge of economic recovery. The United Nations system, development partners and the donor community should respond generously to address the fragile situation in Guinea-Bissau by providing requisite support to strengthen its national institutions and address broad and inclusive political and socio-economic needs.

We therefore wish to add our voice to the call on the International Monetary Fund to consider the resumption of a programme for Guinea-Bissau. We also wish to appeal to the Security Council to join forces with the Economic and Social Council in calling on donors to participate in the round table being organized by the United Nations Development Programme, tentatively scheduled for November 2004.

The progress made by Liberia since the National Transitional Government took office and the United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL) deployed in October 2003 elicits our commendation. Continued and deepened support by the international community to help consolidate the burgeoning gains and effectively meet the challenges of reconstruction and peace-building cannot be overstressed. It is with concern that ECOWAS notes that rehabilitation and reconstruction efforts appear to have taken a back bench. For example, reports reaching us indicate that the United Nations brought the number of days devoted to rehabilitation and reintegration to five days instead of three weeks, in spite of the help required with the rehabilitation of drug addicts, criminals, etc. Relatedly, as elections are fast approaching, there are still problems with the repatriation of refugees, and, as things stand, potentially about 300,000 refugees will be disenfranchised.

We are informed that so far only a small amount out of the $520 million pledged for Liberia last February has been realized. ECOWAS cannot over-emphasize the imperative need for the international community to redeem the pledges made.

The concerns raised in the Security Council mission report over the observed stalemate in the peace process in Côte d'Ivoire should not go without comment. The mission's recommendation seeking appropriate compliance by the parties to the Linas-Marcoussis Agreement converges with ECOWAS's position on the issue. The substantial contribution of ECOWAS in maintaining peace and security in Côte d'Ivoire and the crucial role played by the United Nations Operation in Côte d'Ivoire (ONUCI) in support of the Ivorian peace process, through efforts aimed at building confidence among the contending parties and creating conditions conducive to the return of normalcy in Côte d'Ivoire, have continued unabated.

In this connection, it should be pointed out that there have been some positive developments since the visit of the Security Council mission. As part of mediation efforts deployed by the leaders of ECOWAS, a meeting at the highest level on Côte d'Ivoire, involving the United Nations Secretary-General and several African heads of State, mainly from West Africa, was held in Addis Ababa on 6 July 2004, in the margins of the recent third ordinary session of the African Union. It aimed at building upon previous efforts, the most recent of which was the ECOWAS mini-summit held in Abuja on 20 June 2004, to resume the political dialogue in Côte d'Ivoire and the activities of the Government of National Reconciliation. Among other things, the participants decided that a high-level meeting of all Ivorian political forces, including President Laurent Gbagbo and Prime Minister Seydou Diarra, will be convened in Accra on 29 July 2004 in order to consolidate consensus over all the essential issues facing the peace process.

To ensure the success of the envisaged meeting, the following confidence-building measures were to be undertaken immediately. President Gbagbo would meet with the leaders of all Ivorian political forces to facilitate the resolution of outstanding matters. Legislative texts envisaged under the Linas-Marcoussis Agreement would be enacted before the end of July. If necessary, the President of the Republic should convene an extraordinary session of the parliament. The Joint Commissions between Côte d'Ivoire and Burkina Faso on one hand, and Côte d'Ivoire and Mali on the other hand, would be activated. The heads of State of Burkina Faso, Côte d'Ivoire and Mali will hold a tripartite meeting to prepare the ground for a successful Accra summit on 29 July 2004.

ECOWAS and ONUCI will undertake the necessary follow-up in preparation for the upcoming Accra summit. In this connection, I wish to assure the Council that arrangements are well in hand to hold the

summit, and participation is expected to be at the highest level.

It may be further noted, by way of example, that, prior to the just-mentioned mediation effort, in June 2004 the ECOWAS Defence and Security Commission had approved the establishment of a standby unit of 6,500 highly trained and well-equipped soldiers that could be deployed immediately in response to any crisis or threat to peace and security in West Africa. The unit will include a rapid reaction component of 1,500 soldiers to be known as the ECOWAS Task Force. It is expected that the rapid reaction force will be boosted by a further 3,500 troops, forming a brigade, while the remaining 1,500 would constitute the reserve force.

Against this backdrop of cautious optimism, justified concern and constructive action aimed at achieving redress of the problems bedevilling the region, we share the Council's sentiments on achieving a coherent strategy for attaining transborder solutions to related issues spanning the whole spectrum of peace operations from conflict prevention to peace-building.

ECOWAS is committed to meeting the challenges by ensuring, among other things, full operationalization of the Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management, Resolution, Peacekeeping and Security; the promotion of democracy, good governance and human rights in all member States; the organization of democratic elections and the promotion of economic growth and sustainable development.

To conclude, I wish to restate the gratitude of ECOWAS to the Security Council for its continued efforts at seeking enduring solutions to the myriad of problems that have been visited on the West Africa region and have further undermined peace, security and development for the past one and a half decades. ECOWAS stands united with the Security Council in the unrelenting quest for sustainable peace and development in the region.

The President: I thank the representative of Ghana for the most kind words addressed to me.

The next speaker inscribed on my list is the representative of Guinea. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Sow (Guinea) (*spoke in French*): I should like at the outset to express to you, Mr. President, Guinea's congratulations on your country's assumption of the presidency of the Security Council for the month of July 2004 and on the excellent way in which you are guiding our debates. My thanks go also to your predecessor, Mr. Lauro Baja of the Philippines, for the quality of his presidency.

This public meeting, devoted to considering the report of the Security Council mission to West Africa (S/2004/525), offers me the pleasant opportunity to share with members the appreciation of the Government of Guinea, and particularly of the President of the Republic, for the fruitful working visit to Conakry on 28 June. The intensive exchange of views that took place that day on diverse and complex issues undoubtedly attests to both the Guinean Government's determination to work tirelessly for the restoration of peace and security in the Mano River Basin and to the Security Council's unflagging interest in seeing Guinea consolidate its peaceful and stabilizing influence in its region and in the West African subregion.

The holding of the second Mano River Union Summit at Conakry on 20 May 2004 is also a part of that context. The final communiqué, which was sent to the Security Council for its information, expressed the resolve of member States to carry out their respective obligations under the mechanisms established by the Union. With the Presidents of Mali and of Côte d'Ivoire as observers, the Mano River Union's leaders stressed their unshakeable determination to work together with their counterparts to make the subregion a zone of peace and stability, conducive to close cooperation for lasting and integrated development.

We must recognize that West Africa is gradually emerging from a long, painful period of bloody conflicts, thanks to the joint actions of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), the United Nations system and African and international partners and, above all, to the political commitment of various national actors.

In Sierra Leone, peace has become a reality and is being gradually consolidated. The significant contributions of friendly countries — including the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland — to that peace process remains etched in our collective memory. The preservation of those gains depends on the real capacity of security forces to smoothly assume the duties of the United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone (UNAMSIL), but also on the

creation of new pro-growth economic activities likely to curb the unemployment of young people in particular and to integrate ex-combatants into a new dynamic that will prevent a resurgence of crises and conflicts.

Liberia — not without difficulty, but with real grounds for hope — has been pursuing the path of reconciliation and lasting peace since 14 August 2003. We hope that no effort will be spared to complete the process of disarmament, demobilization and reintegration (DDR) of ex-combatants, to re-establish civil authority throughout the country and to mobilize the financial resources necessary for its reconstruction. In our view, President Gyude Bryant's attachment to good governance and democracy, as noted in the report, is an important factor in peace-building in Liberia and in the subregion. The donor community must take that into account in order to enable the country's leaders to attain the agreed objectives.

In Guinea-Bissau, while we welcome the remarkable progress towards democracy and good governance made since September 2003, we note that many challenges remain on the path towards stability. The immediate provision of financial resources and of technological and institutional capacities will enable us to meet those challenges and to implement the priorities set forth.

Although our subregion is witnessing a general positive trend, the specific situation in Côte d'Ivoire remains a factor of concern. Guinea remains convinced that African wisdom will prevail to enable all the parties concerned to overcome difficulties and to place the peace and reconciliation process on a solid foundation. The subregion's stability depends on that. The forthcoming resumption in Accra of the dialogue between the parties to the Marcoussis Agreement, under the aegis of ECOWAS and of well-known facilitators, promises new perspectives. That is a healthy step in the right direction. Guinea, for its part, advocates preserving the unity, integrity and full sovereignty of Côte d'Ivoire, a neighbouring and brotherly country to which we are linked by many bonds.

Moreover, my delegation would like to stress that peace-building in West Africa depends, above all, on good governance and the eradication of transborder problems such as the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons and the movement of mercenaries and uncontrolled armed groups. The decision of ECOWAS to transform its moratorium on the import and export of weapons into a regional convention will make our joint action more effective. Here, the international community's assistance is indispensable.

Experience teaches us that the quality of Security Council missions hinges on the quality of preparation, on the time allotted for their completion and, above all, on the approaches used in discussions with the various interlocutors. During the preparation and carrying out of these missions, the Security Council tries to include on its agenda field visits, which require time. We believe that such field visits — more than periodic reports — are new and useful sources of information. They enable Council members to grasp realities that no report could describe.

My delegation also believes that in certain cases the time allotted for missions is so brief that it often does not allow for an in-depth exploration of all related issues whose consideration could be decisive in assessing the situation. It is essential that a Security Council mission not send a message that is incomplete or that is not based fully on contacts with the many social actors and institutional partners on the ground. Such an approach — which my delegation encourages — seeks to enrich the results achieved, having as its sole objective the commitment of the parties — or the strengthening of their resolve — to restore peace.

In conclusion, my country hopes that the relevant recommendations of the Council and of the Secretary-General will be swiftly followed up — particularly with regard to the regional scope of decisions and projects and the reconstruction of the Guinea-Forestière area, which continues to host many refugees and displaced persons — within the framework of revitalizing and relaunching the Mano River Union.

In the hope that the Security Council will take our concerns into account, I would like to express once again our appreciation for the results already achieved by its mission under the wise and skilful leadership of Ambassador Sir Emyr Jones Parry. My country, the Republic of Guinea, is fully prepared to strengthen its cooperation with all States of the subregion and with the United Nations to build a better political and economic space that promotes the flourishing of African peoples.

The President: I thank the representative of Guinea for the kind words he addressed to me.

The next speaker inscribed on my list is the representative of Liberia. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Kawah (Liberia): Kindly accept my congratulations, Sir, on your assumption of the presidency of the Security Council for the month of July. I should like to take this opportunity to thank you for extending an invitation to me to make a few comments on the report of the Security Council mission to West Africa, contained in document S/2004/525. Let me also express Liberia's appreciation to those Council members who made the trip and to those members of the Secretariat who accompanied the mission. Special recognition is given to Ambassador Jones Parry of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, who headed the mission.

I have read the report of the mission and find it wholesome in its general observations and relevant when it comes to the Liberian situation. The mission's visit to the West African region can only expand the Council's view and understanding of the complex problems confronting the subregion, some of which are reflected in the report before the Council.

The Council, over the past year, has taken decisions and actions which, for the Liberian people, have created a new sense of realism, renewal and reform. The events of the past several months have led to renewed hope for Liberia and to a new chance for a bright future. The international community has committed significant resources to put Liberia back on the road to recovery after more than two decades of strife and open conflict. According to the report, the new Transitional Government has pledged to break with the habits of the past and to make a new effort to move as quickly as possible into a stable and growth-oriented relationship with the international community.

Let me observe, however, that the efforts of the Security Council will come to fruition only if Liberians are empowered to manage their own affairs. Understandably, Liberia remains a hybrid State in the international arena. The Transitional Government does not have complete control over its territory and is unable to guarantee an acceptable level of security for its people. In those areas there is a partnership between the United Nations and the Liberian Government.

That partnership must be nurtured so that, within a specified time period, the responsibility of governance will devolve to the Liberian people. In this, the question of lifting United Nations sanctions on timber and diamonds is urgent, especially if Liberia is to generate the resources necessary for the country's reconstruction. The requirements for doing this are to be found in Security Council resolution 1521 (2003). To meet those requirements, the assistance of the international community and the understanding of the Security Council are urgent and critical. Meeting the high standards in the management of public funds will not materialize if there are no funds to manage. We are prepared to work with the Council to reach this objective, but we cannot do it alone. Here, we join in the appeal to the donor community to deliver on the pledges made at the United Nations on 5 February 2004. The appeal in paragraph 28 of the report is realistic and urgent.

Within the West African region, and especially within the Mano River Union, we have suffered tremendously. We destroyed the architecture of our heritage and had nothing with which to replace it. We had been one people living in harmony. We have destroyed the simple trust which existed. It is my ardent hope that we have learned something about ourselves and that we are prepared to change, to coexist and to build. We must now, with the Council's help, summon the resolve to elevate our performance to a plateau of functional excellence, for, as the writer Kahlil Gibran said, "when you have reached the mountain top, then you shall begin to climb".

The President: I thank the representative of Liberia for the kind words he addressed to me.

The next speaker is the representative of Nigeria. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Adekanye (Nigeria): I wish on behalf of the delegation of Nigeria to convey our congratulations to you, Sir, on your assumption of the presidency of the Security Council for the month of July. May I also express our appreciation to the Permanent Representative of the Philippines for the efficient manner in which he conducted the proceedings of the Security Council last month.

The delegation of Nigeria has read the report of the Security Council mission to West Africa, 20 to 29 June 2004, contained in document S/2004/525. The

visit was indicative of the Security Council's continuing engagement with the situation in West Africa, as well as a demonstration of the Council's commitment to regular consultation with Member States in the search for durable peace, security and stability in the conflict areas of the subregion. It is thus noteworthy that among the objectives of the mission was to identify additional measures for the promotion of sustainable peace, security and development, and for cooperation with the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) on the design and implementation of a subregional conflict prevention strategy, including how to tackle cross-border problems.

Central to the realization of those objectives is the return of trust and confidence among and between parties to conflict in affected countries. In that process, the value of cooperation between United Nations missions and bodies in the subregion on the one hand and ECOWAS on the other cannot be overemphasized. The mission, in our estimation, not only underscored this but also recognized the increasingly active and valuable role being played by ECOWAS in mobilizing countries in the region to undertake peacekeeping missions. In that regard, we wish to underscore the proactive role of the ECOWAS Chairman, President John Kufuor of Ghana, President Obasanjo of Nigeria and President Eyadema of Togo in the search for a solution to the Ivorian political impasse.

The wide-ranging discussions the mission held with West African leaders, including President Obasanjo, provided insights and identified challenges that the international community faces in the subregion.

In Côte d'Ivoire, there is a need to support the process of rapprochement and reconciliation. We note that the leadership of that country is committed to taking necessary measures that would restore confidence and trust and would prevent relapse into conflict. Those measures include the reconstitution of the Government of National Reconciliation: a detailed time-bound schedule for implementation of the Linas-Marcoussis Agreement; legislation by the National Assembly on fundamental political reforms, as envisaged in the Agreement; and, of course, the holding of a regular high-level dialogue, without preconditions, among the country's parties. We are confident that the Ivorian parties will ensure that the benchmarks given the mission are indeed met.

Meanwhile, we commend the positive role being played by the United Nations Mission in Côte d'Ivoire in the preparations for general elections by October 2005. We enjoin the Ivorian parties to accord the Mission the requisite support and cooperation.

On Liberia, Nigeria welcomes the progress made since the National Transitional Government took office. Given the enormous challenges of post-conflict peace-building in that country, we join the Council in calling on those countries that have not done so to redeem the pledges they made at the international donors conference held last February. We also call on the Security Council to consider the lifting of its embargo on the trade in timber and other natural resources, so that the Liberian Government can have the necessary funds for the rehabilitation of its infrastructure. This is consistent with the decision of the recently concluded Third Summit of the African Union, which was held at Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.

On Guinea-Bissau, Nigeria is pleased to observe the progress made by the Government of that country in the political transition process. We commend the positive role being played by the Economic and Social Council Ad Hoc Advisory Group on Guinea-Bissau, as well as by the Group of Friends of Guinea-Bissau. Those efforts complement the role of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) in support of a return to political normalcy in the country. We support the mission's recommendation that the Bretton Woods institutions and the international donor community should remain actively engaged by providing the necessary financial resources and technical assistance to the country.

On Sierra Leone, Nigeria expresses its condolences to the United Nations and to the Governments of concerned countries, as well as our heartfelt sympathy to the families of the peacekeepers who perished in the recent helicopter crash in Sierra Leone. We salute the courage and dedication of those individuals, who paid the ultimate price in the service of humanity.

While we welcome the progress achieved by the Sierra Leone Government, especially in the area of strengthening its military and police capacities, we believe that the security situation on the ground remains fragile. There is therefore a need for the cautious drawdown of the United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone, in order to ensure sustainable peace.

Finally, Nigeria notes with satisfaction the mission's support for the ECOWAS Moratorium on the Importation, Exportation and Manufacture of Small Arms and Light Weapons in West Africa. As the Council is no doubt aware, the Moratorium will soon be strengthened through a convention that will be mandatory on all signatories. That reflects the commitment of countries in our subregion to the fight against the scourge of these weapons. We shall continue to count on the Council and the international community in those efforts.

The President: I thank the representative of Nigeria for the words of appreciation he addressed to me.

The next speaker inscribed on my list is the representative of Sierra Leone. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Pemagbi (Sierra Leone): Let me join previous speakers in congratulating you, Mr. President, on your assumption of the responsibilities of running the Security Council this month.

We would like to associate ourselves with the statement delivered by the representative of Ghana on behalf of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS).

The delegation of the Republic of Sierra Leone wishes to express its profound appreciation to the Council for its assessment mission to West Africa, whose report (S/2004/525) we are here to discuss. The mission is yet another concrete indication of the Council's commitment to resolving the conflicts in the West African subregion. We salute members of the mission for the visit and the impressively prepared report. My delegation is convinced that sustainable peace and political stability can return to that crisis-ridden region if the recommendations of the mission are implemented. We therefore urge all stakeholders, including the United Nations and other members of the international community, the Economic Community of West African States and the Governments and other parties to the conflicts in the countries in the region to cooperate in the implementation of the recommendations.

My delegation would like to take this opportunity to remind the Council about two depressing facts concerning the conflicts in the West African subregion, careful consideration of which may provide added momentum to the long and tedious search for peace.

First, for about 15 years now, most of the time and resources of ECOWAS have been concentrated on conflicts in the region, almost completely diverting the attention of the organization from its original objective of regional economic integration and development. Thus, those conflicts have retarded national as well as regional development initiatives.

The second fact I wish to recall is that it has not been easy even for countries in the region that have not been in conflict to pursue the goals of international development declarations, such as the Millennium Development Goals and the goals of the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD). Do we sincerely expect those already poor countries that are in conflict, or transiting from conflict to peace, where even the basic social services are a luxury, to fulfil their obligations under such declarations? Special assistance to those countries to help them to catch up is the only answer to their predicament.

I have reminded the Council about those two intimately related issues to underscore the need to take a fresh and hard look at peacekeeping operations and peace processes, as suggested in the report. What my delegation is advocating is a strategy of an integrated approach to the peace effort that not only conducts disarmament, demobilization and reintegration and then disappears from the conflict scene, but, as part of the peace process, also addresses the issues of the conflict and ensures a smooth transition from hostility to sustainable peace and development.

As we all know, disarmament and demobilization can be a simple and straightforward exercise if the parties to a conflict are committed to resolving it. Reintegration is a much more complicated, expensive and multifaceted process, around which the issue of post-conflict transition revolves. In Sierra Leone, for example, the two elections held in 2002 — parliamentary and presidential — and the local-government elections held in May this year, constituted major progress in the political reintegration process. But by far the most critical aspect of reintegration, which can be called survival or economic reintegration, is yet to be fully accomplished because of the poor state of the economy. Education, skills and employment opportunities are the tools for that aspect of reintegration. Ignoring them can amount to leaving a

vacuum in the peace process that can stimulate regeneration of the conflict. We therefore strongly support the mission's view that the link between security and sustainable development should be strengthened.

This delegation particularly welcomes the recommendation on a regional approach to the problem and on the need for cooperation and positive relations between neighbouring States. We in Sierra Leone, for example, drawing from the experience of our conflict, will never feel safe and secure until our neighbours have peace and no one undermines the stability of the others. We believe, however, that the peace effort in the region should ensure that armed conflict does not spread further. We realize that this is not easy, but avoiding it will not in the long term be in the best interest of peace, stability and development in the region.

The report contains a good account of the major concerns of Sierra Leone, including support for strengthening the capability of the security machinery, the Special Court, reviving the shattered economy to resume active development and to provide employment opportunities, and rebuilding institutions to reinforce Government authority — all as part of the post-conflict recovery process. My delegation merely wishes to re-echo our President's appeal for support for the national recovery programme, which in fact has provision for addressing many of the issues raised in the report. These are the foundation and building blocks of durable peace, stability and development. They are the tools that destroy the gear that can reverse our drive through transition. We need the Council's support for these tools.

Let me remind members of the Council that the experience of Sierra Leone has been extraordinary, as has been their response. But the fascinating story of their positive response will be incomplete without sustained support for the transition process. I therefore repeat my President's appeal to the Security Council and the international community to remain an active part of this critical post-conflict transition phase.

The President: I thank the representative of Sierra Leone for his kind words addressed to me.

The next speaker on my list is the representative of South Africa. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Kumalo (South Africa): First, allow me to congratulate you, Sir, on assuming the presidency of the Council for the month of July. I wish to also thank you for inviting the Economic and Social Council Ad Hoc Advisory Group on Guinea-Bissau to participate in this meeting to discuss the report of the Security Council mission to West Africa.

Without the support of the Security Council, and in particular of Ambassador Emyr Jones Parry of the United Kingdom, who led the Security Council mission, our participation in the mission might not have been possible. We thank Ambassador Jones Parry for making it possible. We are also thankful to this Council for its support and its growing and meaningful working relationship with the Economic and Social Council.

There have been very significant and meaningful changes that have taken place in Guinea-Bissau. On 28 March 2004, Guinea-Bissau held legislative elections that were deemed free, fair and transparent by a team of international observers. Nonetheless, the optimism we have about the future of Guinea-Bissau is not based simply on the holding of a successful election. Our joint visit confirmed that there is reason to describe what is happening in Guinea-Bissau as a breakthrough.

The newly elected National Popular Assembly is committed to completing the review of the Constitution during its current session that will lay the groundwork for the holding of presidential elections in 2005. The new Government is also intent on strengthening its partnership and dialogue with its international development partners, in the spirit of the partnership approach endorsed by the Economic and Social Council in 2003. This approach should help restore international economic and financial confidence in Guinea-Bissau.

During our visit, we saw a Government that is committed to improved governance and is in the process of strengthening mechanisms that will deepen democracy in that country. The Council may recall frequent changes and dismissals of senior officials, including in the Office of the Prime Minister and the Ministry of Economy and Finance, that contributed to the institutional instability of the past and threatened peace and security in Guinea-Bissau. The new Government, however, has begun practising greater transparency and accountability in public administration by selecting senior public officials

based on merit and technical experience. This approach by the Government is already contributing to overall stability.

A Treasury Committee that includes the United Nations Development Programme scrutinizes both revenue collection and expenditures within the Ministry of Economy and Finance. As a result, there are already visible gains in revenue collection that have made it possible for the Government to be able, after only 45 days in office, to pay three months of salaries to its public servants from its own resources.

However, Guinea-Bissau remains in need of official development assistance to rebuild its social and economic infrastructure and private investment to relaunch the economy. Our Group is convinced that a modest investment in the short- to medium-term in the economy would help Guinea-Bissau to consolidate the progress that the Government has made so far.

The Group is very encouraged by the positive approach that the Bretton Woods institutions continue to pursue in regard to Guinea-Bissau. The International Monetary Fund (IMF) has played a critical and constructive role in supporting the Government of Guinea-Bissau by providing technical assistance in many areas, including in revenue administration, customs, expenditure management and real and fiscal sector statistics. The IMF Executive Board is expected to meet in mid-September 2004 to consider the report of article IV consultations with the Government of Guinea-Bissau. It is expected that the Board may consider a programme that could lead to the resumption of the Poverty Reduction and Growth Facility programme for Guinea-Bissau. Our Group would hope that the Security Council will urge the IMF to positively consider the resumption of a programme for Guinea-Bissau.

The World Bank's new medium-term strategy, expected to begin in September 2004, is also a welcome sign of the Bank's confidence in Guinea-Bissau. The new programme will support the restoration of macroeconomic stability and provide support for social services, particularly health and education, the reinforcement of governance and the rehabilitation of economic infrastructure, namely, in water, energy, transport and telecommunications. Both the Fund and the Bank, however, have made it clear that the implementation of their own programmes will not be successful without the strong and active engagement of the donor community.

In conclusion, in the area of peace and security, the Group is concerned about the restructuring of the security sector. Working and living conditions for the military are extremely poor. In the context of the recent history of Guinea-Bissau, the transformation of the armed forces into a professional force is absolutely critical to minimizing the risk of the country's relapsing into conflict. This is important because the security situation in Guinea-Bissau remains fragile in a subregion that is itself fragile.

The joint mission has concluded that it is essential to continue to monitor and support political, economic and social developments in Guinea-Bissau. Indeed, our Group concurs and believes that sustained support is absolutely essential to ensuring that Guinea-Bissau does not lose the recent gains achieved.

The President: I thank the representative of South Africa for the words of appreciation he addressed to my delegation.

The next speaker on my list is the representative of the Netherlands. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. van den Berg (Netherlands): It is my honour to speak on behalf of the European Union. The candidate countries Bulgaria, Croatia, Romania and Turkey, the countries of the Stabilization and Association Process and potential candidates Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia and Montenegro and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, the European Free Trade Association countries Iceland and Norway, members of the European Economic Area, align themselves with this statement.

Although we note positive developments, the situation in West Africa remains fragile. For the Council to focus on the region is therefore appropriate at this moment when we ask ourselves how positive developments can be strengthened and relapses avoided.

The goals of the Security Council mission to West Africa were twofold. First, the mission set out to address particular situations in a number of countries in the region. Most pressing were the talks in Côte d'Ivoire, where the mission tried to rekindle negotiations between parties. The European Union shares the Security Council's concern at the situation in

Côte d'Ivoire and reaffirms the individual responsibility of the political leaders to avoid confrontation and engage in dialogue and negotiations on the basis of the Linas-Marcoussis Agreement. The European Union fully appreciates the strong message that was delivered by the mission to all political leaders in Côte d'Ivoire. In that regard, we also welcome the West African mini-summit organized by the Secretary-General on 6 July in Addis Ababa, which is to be followed up later this month in Accra.

Secondly, the mission addressed a wide number of thematic, region-wide issues. In that regard, the mission followed up on the 12 March 2004 report of the Secretary-General on cross-border problems (S/2004/200). I would also refer to the comprehensive strategy for cooperation with West Africa adopted by the European Union in May 2004. A central tenet of that strategy is tackling the overarching challenge of integrating short-term crisis management with longer-term preventive measures.

I would like to focus my intervention on three thematic issues that are related to long-term developments: the United Nations post-conflict strategy for the region, the value of regional integration and synergies of peacekeeping operations.

First, with respect to post-conflict situations, the current situation in West Africa offers, in the words of the report, a real chance to break out of the cycle of conflict and poverty. Throughout its mission, the Security Council stressed the relationship between security and development. The European Union fully agrees that, in making the transition to peace and economic development in West Africa, that link is of the utmost importance.

As the United Nations lacks one single operational peace-building body, United Nations organs have to cooperate actively to bring together security and development concerns. We certainly hope that the Security Council will further pursue the comprehensive approach it adopted in the mission report (S/2004/525). One way might be to explore further ad hoc composite committees of the Security Council, the Economic and Social Council and/or the General Assembly that deal specifically with post-conflict situations. A positive example in the West African region is the Economic and Social Council Ad Hoc Advisory Group on Guinea-Bissau.

Yesterday, the Economic and Social Council discussed the assessment of the ad hoc advisory groups. The European Union reiterated the valuable contributions those groups make in pursuing a comprehensive United Nations approach to peace-building. It was also stated that collaboration between the Security Council and the Economic and Social Council could be intensified. We would like to take this opportunity to make the very same point.

Areas of potential cooperation are disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programmes and security sector reform. The Security Council and the Economic and Social Council could also rally together to seek donor assistance. Post-conflict situations too easily disappear from the front pages and consequently from the radar screen of donors.

My second set of remarks regards regional integration. Of course, the primary responsibility for bringing about change and sustaining peace efforts lies with the States in the region. In our view, regional integration in West Africa can play a vital role in preventing future conflicts. For years, cross-border problems such as child soldiers, mercenaries, small arms and the illegal exploitation of natural resources have been fuelling conflicts. Solutions too must therefore also be found at the regional level.

In West Africa, we recognize the positive role of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS). Like many other countries and organizations, the European Union supports the strengthening of that organization and of its institutional capacity. In our view, now is the time to work out a systemic donor coordination mechanism under the leadership of ECOWAS. The European Union strategy of May 2004 also calls for the development of a conceptual framework for conflict prevention and peace-building in West Africa. We hope the leaders in the region will enable ECOWAS to undertake that task.

Finally, the international community can also contribute by intensifying its partnership both with individual countries and with relevant organizations in the region. The European Union tries to structure its political dialogue with ECOWAS for that purpose. As the European Union President, the Netherlands has invited all Foreign Ministers of ECOWAS to an informal meeting with their European Union counterparts in Maastricht on 4 September. I can also

report that this week the European Union extended the mandate of Mr. Hans Dahlgren as representative of the presidency of the European Union to the countries of the Mano River Union.

My last set of remarks regards synergy and peacekeeping. The report of the mission deals with collaboration and coordination within and between United Nations missions in West Africa. Currently, three large United Nations peacekeeping operations are active in the region, amounting to almost 30,000 troops and nearly half the peacekeeping budget of the United Nations.

True, the situations in the countries differ. At the same time, many problems and challenges with which the United Nations has to deal are closely related. It seems worthwhile to make a thorough analysis of the United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL), the United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone (UNAMSIL) and the United Nations Operation in Côte d'Ivoire (UNOCI) and look for attainable synergies. Common border patrols and the exchange of information are things that immediately come to mind. We might also look at more fundamental questions such as the possible scope of a pooling of logistical needs.

The European Union looks forward to the report that is currently being prepared by the Secretariat on this issue. West Africa stands to benefit greatly from ideas that would make the United Nations missions in the region more effective. Subsequent efficiency gains could possibly enable a more sustained United Nations presence throughout the region. They would also benefit the wider United Nations and provide us all with important lessons to be learned for regional peacekeeping.

Let me conclude by thanking you again, Mr. President, for the opportunity to discuss with the Council and with the countries of the region the report of the Council's mission to West Africa. Whether it is for short-term crisis management or long-term strategy, the European Union stands ready to be a partner to contribute our shared goal of peace and stability for the peoples of the region.

The President: I thank the representative of the Netherlands for his kind words addressed to the presidency.

The next speaker is the representative of Japan. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Haraguchi (Japan): The Government of Japan considers the consolidation of peace and the realization of human security to be the most urgent and essential agenda for the West Africa region. Japan continues to undertake various initiatives, mainly through the Tokyo International Conference on African Development process, to effectively address those issues.

In that regard, my Government welcomes the fact that the transition to peace and stability is proceeding in Sierra Leone and Liberia and that progress has been made in a number of areas towards the reconstruction of both those countries. We are also pleased to note that Guinea-Bissau has held successful legislative elections and that a major step has been taken toward restoring constitutional order. We have been actively providing support for such efforts in order to accelerate the pace of progress, as stated at the Security Council meeting on 25 March (see S/PV.4933). With respect to Liberia, my Government has extended approximately $9 million in assistance from March to July to support the disarmament, demobilization, reintegration and rehabilitation (DDRR) process, and humanitarian and similar efforts.

In view of the geopolitical conditions in West Africa, where the situations in neighbouring countries are often closely interlinked, it is critical to take a regional approach to securing the peace and stability of individual countries. As has been repeatedly observed in the past, and is pointed out again in the report of the Security Council mission to West Africa (S/2004/525), we must recognize that, quite often, instability in a certain country has a negative impact on the region as a whole. From that point of view, we are deeply concerned about the current political impasse in Côte d'Ivoire and would like to emphasize once again that a clear commitment and determined efforts on the part of all parties concerned are needed in order to promote the peace process, especially in terms of full and unconditional implementation of the Linas-Marcoussis Agreement. In that regard, the Government of Japan commends the efforts of the Secretary-General, the African Union and concerned countries to set common objectives and a work schedule with a view to holding a summit in Accra on 29 July.

We sent a delegation to the African Union Summit held in Ethiopia last week. We are glad that we were able to meet with a number of the leaders and ministers of countries in the West Africa region to exchange views on issues of peace in the region, including that of Côte d'Ivoire, as well as on the critical importance of consolidating peace.

Having said that, I would like to point out the following three issues that we consider of particular importance in promoting a regional approach. First, Japan welcomes the effort towards achieving mutual cooperation, especially in the field of border controls, among the United Nations missions deployed in several countries of West Africa. It is expected that, as a result of that effort, limited United Nations resources will be used more efficiently and that cost-effectiveness will be greatly increased. We also welcome the gradual scaling down of the United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone (UNAMSIL) as a result of its successful progress. This reminds us of the need for other peacekeeping operations to be re-evaluated, based on an assessment of the actual situation on the ground, and adjusted as necessary. As regards the suggestion in the report that the United Nations Office for West Africa should be provided with additional resources, we would like to emphasize that this proposal should be thoroughly examined from the standpoint of whether it will facilitate the promotion of cooperation with the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS).

Secondly, it is important to enhance the capacity of Africa itself for managing conflicts. In this area, ECOWAS, which is actively conducting various activities in West Africa for the prevention of conflict, has a significant role to play in the region. The United Nations should try to strengthen the capacity of ECOWAS through further mutual cooperation efforts. As stated in the report, to achieve sustainable peace and development, it is essential that not only the countries emerging from conflict but also all the neighbouring countries in the region make efforts to improve their governance through such activities as strengthened border controls and anti-corruption campaigns. International support in this regard is certainly necessary, but we would like to emphasize that the ownership efforts of Africa are the most important element.

Thirdly, Japan shares the view that DDRR is one of the most critical tasks in the peace process. In that connection, we take note of the point raised in the report about the discrepancy in available funding between DD — demobilization and disarmament — and RR — repatriation and rehabilitation. Japan has provided support for DDRR in countries such as Sierra Leone, Liberia and Côte d'Ivoire, and will continue to cooperate in this field.

We also share the concern of the mission over the three-to-one discrepancy between the amounts of the compensation payments offered in Côte d'Ivoire by the World Bank and in Liberia by the Department of Peacekeeping Operations budget. It is reported that this discrepancy is accelerating the flow of ex-combatants into Côte d'Ivoire and is threatening to become a source of instability. With regard to the compensation payments, the question of whether the use of the Department of Peacekeeping Operations budget is appropriate should be re-examined, while promoting the involvement of the World Bank and other development institutions.

Moreover, the ongoing implementation of DDRR in each country will not lead to a fundamental resolution of the problem unless the flow of small arms is controlled effectively throughout the region as a whole. In that connection, we recognize the importance of the role that ECOWAS has been playing in controlling the movement of arms by means of its moratorium on small arms. We also consider it useful to have the Secretary-General's recommendations on what action the Security Council should take to help reduce the proliferation of small arms in the subregion, as indicated in the mission report.

We have repeatedly underscored the necessity of evaluating the cost-effectiveness of Security Council missions. We believe it would be very helpful if a detailed explanation were made publicly available of the benefits and costs of sending a Security Council mission to a region where on-the-ground United Nations activities are in place.

We would also like to reiterate that it is of the utmost importance that ownership efforts be promoted by each country in the West Africa region, with the cooperation of international society, in order to ensure the attainment of peace in West Africa. So long as such ownership efforts continue to be made in the region, Japan will remain committed to supporting such efforts as a responsible member of the international community.

Mr. Adechi (Benin) (*spoke in French*): We wish to express our warm appreciation to Ambassador Jones Parry for his excellent introduction of the report (S/2004/525) of the Security Council mission to West Africa, which he headed.

After all that has been said on the subject, we will be brief. Although, given the duration of the mission, the objectives that we set were rather ambitious, the challenges that the region faces fully justified the mission. In each of the seven countries that received the mission, we were able to see that, even if the real state of affairs were different in each case, the origins and consequences of the problems were for the most part the same. We were also able to appreciate again how important a United Nations presence in the region is, and we took note of the agreement between the Security Council's analysis and the analyses of the subregional organization and the continental organization.

We noted that the process of restoring normalcy and peace-building in the region depends heavily on the creation of an environment that would develop the strong economic potential of the subregion. Moreover, that is clear with regard to the many recommendations made, which the report introduced by Ambassador Jones Parry describes in detail.

Finally, the mission gave Council members an opportunity to assess the possibilities for strengthening cooperation among the United Nations and subregional and continental organizations, whose resolve to effectively promote peace and stability in the countries of the subregion is well known. As a result of the mission, we have an excellent harvest of information, which should enable us to better orient our activities in the subregion's direction.

My delegation therefore believes it is now imperative that we set in order the priorities identified with a view to addressing more effectively the issue of mobilizing and rationally using financial, material and even human resources, whose scarcity often contributes to the failure of recommended measures. The considerations I just outlined prove the need to ensure systematic follow-up by the Security Council of implementation of the mission's conclusions and of the recommendations made in the context of the first report of the Secretary-General on ways to combat regional and cross-border problems in West Africa. The Security Council's Ad Hoc Working Group on Conflict Prevention should also study the report to identify opportunities for synergy with a view to promoting peace and stability in the subregion.

Mr. Baali (Algeria) (*spoke in French*): I shall try to be as brief as my colleague from Benin. First of all, I should like to congratulate the mission's members and, at their head, Ambassador Emyr Jones Parry on the quality of the work accomplished in a relatively short period of time.

As a result of their visit to the West African subregion, they returned strengthened in the conviction that development, peace and security are closely linked and that it would therefore be futile to plan for development without providing it with the prerequisite of peace, and vice versa. They also noted first-hand the regional aspect of domestic crises that, assisted by circumstances, spread swiftly to other countries, which themselves have often just emerged from devastating conflicts.

Those quick observations enable us to believe that the dynamic approach to conflict prevention called for by the mission's members can only be comprehensive and collective. It must, of course, involve the countries of the region, but also the United Nations system, whose strategy must range from peacekeeping to supporting measures to ensure that the peace is deeply rooted.

From that perspective, it is important to observe that, in the countries visited by the mission, the key words now seem to be reconstruction and reconciliation and that priority has been given to the organization of free and transparent elections, to development and to good governance. Likewise, in each of the countries, the challenges are more or less identical, although not always of equal intensity. They include a lack of financial means, social and economic problems, issues of disarmament, demobilization, rehabilitation and reintegration (DDRR), the repatriation of foreign combatants, the restructuring of armed forces, corruption, impunity, the circulation of light weapons, the recruitment of child soldiers, human rights violations and the threat of uncontrolled crises spilling over borders.

Mobilizing the donor community and the Bretton Woods institutions to provide financial resources and technical assistance as well as to ensure the success of political, economic and social reforms in these countries is more essential than ever before. Therefore,

it would be desirable for the pledges of contributions to those countries to be quickly implemented.

I should like to say a word about Côte d'Ivoire. The impasse over the implementation of the Linas-Marcoussis Agreement and the paralysis of the Government of National Reconciliation could, if we are not careful, gravely compromise the entire peace process. Although we welcome the commitments undertaken by President Gbagbo during the mini-summit presided over by the Secretary-General on 6 July at Addis Ababa, my delegation believes that, in order to break the deadlock and to ensure the adoption of the legislative reforms envisaged by 28 July, the international community — particularly the Security Council — must ensure that the commitments are respected. We await the holding and the results of the regional summit planned for 29 July in the Ghanaian capital.

Here, I should like to commend the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) for its active and valuable role in peace-building in the subregion and to call for an intensification of the cooperation among ECOWAS, the United Nations system and other regional organizations to address the subregional and cross-border problems in West Africa. We also believe it essential to strengthen the United Nations Office for West Africa so that it can fully play its role in an effective and consistent regional approach with regard to conflicts.

Finally, I should like to welcome the efforts made at the continental, regional and subregional levels to increase peacekeeping capacities in Africa. The establishment of the African Union's Peace and Security Council, the active role played by subregional organizations, particularly ECOWAS, and the deployment of African peacekeeping missions are the most striking illustrations.

Mr. Valle (Brazil): My delegation is grateful to you, Mr. President, for convening this meeting. We thank Ambassador Jones Parry for introducing the report (S/2004/525).

First of all, I take this opportunity to mention that, in 10 days' time, President Lula da Silva will take part in a meeting of the Community of Portuguese-Speaking Countries (CPLP) in Sao Tome and Principe, and, pursuing our policy of cooperation and solidarity with Africa, he will also visit Cape Verde and Gabon. West Africa faces us from the other side of the Atlantic and is very close to our hearts and minds. We consider that discussions pertaining to countries of the region should have the full involvement of all Council members.

The progress being made in Liberia, Sierra Leone and Guinea-Bissau is quite impressive. In Côte d'Ivoire the political deadlock seemed insurmountable. But, having heard Under-Secretary-General Guéhenno's briefing last Tuesday, we have renewed hope that the difficult situation in that country will benefit from the personal involvement of the Secretary-General at Addis Ababa and the upcoming meeting in Accra. We are also very pleased by the active engagement of heads of State of the region and of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) in the process of helping Ivorian parties return to the negotiating table.

In the countries I mentioned, poverty and unemployment represent a permanent source of instability and insecurity. We consider that the Council should be regularly informed about what specific projects are being carried out by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and by United Nations country teams in order to foster economic occupation in the short term — particularly by young people, who are most likely to fall prey to militias and armed groups. Although direct responsibility for development initiatives falls elsewhere within this Organization, their link to peace and security becomes ever more evident. That is why the attention devoted by the Council to development in post-conflict areas should be increased.

We were also very encouraged by the intention of ECOWAS to develop a conflict-prevention strategy. It is our expectation that, in the future, the Council will be working within a framework not only of peacekeeping operations, but also of conflict-avoidance initiatives. Cooperation between ECOWAS and the United Nations Office for West Africa is very welcome, and we agree that the Office's needs for additional resources should be looked into as a matter of priority. However, it seems that, having been created as a result of the call of ECOWAS for a regional approach to threats to peace and security, the Office could benefit from being located in Abuja.

With regard to Guinea-Bissau, our delegation has always stressed the importance of joint work done by the Security Council and by the Economic and Social Council, and it is a very positive sign that the mission

was undertaken jointly with the Ad Hoc Advisory Group.

The international community must remain fully engaged in Guinea-Bissau so that the investment there will not have been made in vain. The significant progress made in the political transition should not be lost through insufficient economic activity. We call upon the Bretton Woods institutions and development partners to step up their financial and technical assistance to that country, with a view to a smooth process towards sustainable peace, culminating in presidential elections in March 2005.

A matter of grave concern is the large quantity of arms held by the population, as the report has indicated. There are concerns that arms from other countries in the subregion might be heading to Guinea-Bissau. We wonder if the high ratio of combatants to weapons noted in Liberia could mean that arms are being smuggled out of one country into another, in particular into countries without a United Nations military presence, as is the case of Guinea and Guinea-Bissau. The joint mechanisms for cooperation among peacekeeping operations in the region should prevent that from happening. We fully agree with the mission's recommendation that the Security Council should give consideration to the issue, and that ECOWAS should include Guinea-Bissau in its regional policies of containing proliferation. The fact, stated in the report, that ECOWAS is planning to strengthen its moratorium on small arms and to replace it with a mandatory convention is a welcome development, and the Council should support that initiative.

On the question of a regional approach to cross-border problems, it seems from the recommendations contained in the report that the harmonization of the various programmes of disarmament, demobilization, reintegration and repatriation or resettlement in the region has not progressed as much as expected. This is probably the single most important item for coordination among United Nations peacekeeping missions in West Africa, and it should be constantly pursued and should include, as recommended by the Security Council, countries neighbouring those emerging from conflict.

Finally, since Brazil chairs the sanctions Committee for Sierra Leone, I would like to add that the point raised in paragraph 42 of the report has also been brought to the attention of Committee members by the Special Court and that the Committee will be looking into the matter as soon as next week. The Committee will give due consideration to the request for a priori exemption from the travel ban for those under the custody of the Court should they need urgent removal for medical treatment.

Mr. Konuzin (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): We welcome the outcome of the Security Council mission to West Africa, which we view as an important signal to parties to conflict that they must abide by the commitments they have undertaken. We stress that, in the light of the cross-border nature of many problems in West Africa, the consideration and resolution of such problems must be comprehensive and far-reaching. I turn now to the situations in specific countries.

To make further progress in the peace process in Côte d'Ivoire, approaches must be harmoniously combined on the basis of the provisions of the Linas-Marcoussis Agreement and the Côte d'Ivoire Constitution. We welcome the regional summit held in Addis Ababa on 6 July, and we have hopes for the results of the contacts among the Côte d'Ivoire parties to take place at Accra on 29 July. It is important to do everything possible to end the increased centrifugal forces operating in the country, particularly during the preparations for elections. It is also crucial to overcome ongoing uncertainty with respect to programmes of disarmament, demobilization and reintegration. We take note of the Government's adoption of specific measures to put an end to impunity. All those guilty of human rights violations must receive the punishment they deserve. Here, we shall attach particular importance to the final report of the International Commission of Inquiry to investigate all reports of human rights violations since the events of September 2002.

With regard to Liberia, we must always bear in mind that, for practical purposes, Government authority is limited to Monrovia, and that armed factions continue to hold sway in other parts of the country. The international community must step up its efforts to assist the Government in strengthening State authority throughout the territory of Liberia. The elections planned for October 2005 have an important role to play in stabilizing the country. A timetable for the political process is needed to ensure that the elections take place as scheduled, and it must be unswervingly followed. As to the lifting of sanctions,

this must be closely linked to guarantees of the irreversibility of a political settlement in Liberia.

In Sierra Leone, the authorities have a great deal to do as the peacekeeping operation there comes to an end. The final drawdown of the United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone directly depends on how effectively the Government can control the situation.

In Guinea-Bissau, constitutional order must be restored as quickly as possible, through the holding of elections that adhere to democratic standards. It is important to make every effort to support positive trends and not to allow the peace process to be undermined. Here, it is even more critical that the international community provide the country with the assistance it needs.

The current transparency of borders in the region gives rise to numerous, extremely serious problems and threats that demand comprehensive study and resolution taking account of recommendations and proposals formulated on the basis of joint efforts by United Nations missions in the region, the Security Council mission to West Africa and regional and subregional organizations. In our view, this matter merits special, in-depth consideration.

Mr. Mercado (Philippines): We thank you, Mr. President, for convening this important meeting to discuss the outcome of the recent Security Council mission to West Africa. We join other delegations in commending Ambassador Emyr Jones Parry for his able leadership of that productive mission, which visited seven countries in 10 days.

West Africa is a region that faces many challenges, but it is also a region of great potential. That potential, however, has not been realized in past years. It is in that light that the Security Council continues to remain actively seized of the issues of the region. The Security Council's visits last year and last month were not only a clear manifestation of the Council's keen interest in the promotion of peace and security in West Africa, but also, and equally important, the Council's strongest medium for delivering its message to the concerned parties in the region. The main themes, which cut across the seven countries visited by the mission, were the unbreakable link between peace and security on the one hand and economic development on the other, and the need to employ a regional approach in addressing complex crises and conflicts in the region.

Bearing those themes in mind, we welcome the report of the mission (S/2004/525) and would like to highlight the following points.

First, inasmuch as security and development go hand in hand, the United Nations should harness and use all of its resources in planning and implementing its conflict-prevention, conflict-resolution and post-conflict peace-building strategies. That entails interdependence, cooperation and coordination among United Nations organs whose mandates have an impact on the attainment of sustainable peace. The collaborative work undertaken by the Economic and Social Council's Ad Hoc Advisory Group on Guinea-Bissau and the Security Council's Ad Hoc Working Group on Conflict Prevention and Resolution in Africa in monitoring and supporting the political, economic and social developments in Guinea-Bissau have resulted in appreciable progress in carrying out a peaceful transition in that country. That collaboration should continue, and it should be encouraged for other countries in the region.

Secondly, the Security Council should also be guided by the economic aspects of its interventions when planning its exit strategies for peacekeeping operations. A case in point is Sierra Leone. While its gross domestic product has been growing by an average of 6.5 per cent for the past three years, it cannot be denied that the United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone (UNAMSIL) is an important contributor to the Sierra Leone economy. The departure of UNAMSIL in 2005 would have a negative impact on the country's economy, at least in the short term. That means a shift of focus from security-sector reform — which should still be pursued — to creating jobs and stimulating private investment to sustain economic growth. Inasmuch as Sierra Leone is now in the post-conflict peace-building stage, greater attention should be given to economic concerns.

Another lesson learned from this situation is that the economic impact of the drawdown of successful peacekeeping operations should be factored into withdrawal decisions. In view of that, economic indicators could be used as one of the benchmarks in drafting future drawdown plans for peacekeeping operations.

Thirdly, the Security Council should continue to exert its influence in creating a constructive environment for these post-conflict countries to receive

aid and get investments. It cannot be denied that the Security Council's positive engagement in a country can encourage donors to provide financial assistance and persuade entities to invest. Since peace and security are the paramount considerations of investors, the Council's imprimatur can convince investors to bring in their resources — for example, to rebuild physical infrastructure, which is an important requirement for long-term economic development in Liberia, Sierra Leone and Guinea-Bissau.

In the same vein, the Council should also strongly encourage those countries to improve their business climates for investor confidence, as institutional stability is the second main concern of investors, after peace and security. That can be done by assuring transparency and accountability in governance.

My delegation would finally like to underscore the important role of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) in the West African equation. ECOWAS is the regional organization most capable of helping the countries of West Africa achieve peace and development. ECOWAS still faces serious challenges, but it is growing in effectiveness. ECOWAS needs the continued strong support of both the Security Council and the international community in order to achieve its goals and objectives.

We recognize the recent efforts of ECOWAS in attaining economic integration. As post-conflict peace-building looms on the horizon, it may be time for ECOWAS to give attention to the economic considerations of the region, which was the original purpose of its existence. The establishment of the Abidjan-Lagos highway corridor, the construction of the Lagos-Accra pipeline and plans for a West African power grid system are initiatives with far-reaching consequences that should be actively pursued.

Much work lies ahead of us in operationalizing the various recommendations contained in the mission's report. The problems of West Africa continue even as we speak. We have no other option but to proceed to implement the courses of action we have agreed upon. My delegation looks forward to the day when the Security Council need not send its members to the field to assess the situation and find solutions to problems in the region. When that day arrives, it will mean that we have done our job.

Mr. Zhang Yishan (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): The Chinese delegation welcomes the convening of this meeting. I am grateful to Ambassador Jones Parry for his briefing, and to other countries for their statements.

The West African subregion is endowed with rich natural resources and a large population; it has a great potential for economic development and prosperity. And yet, for different reasons, many countries in the region have, to varying degrees, been afflicted by armed conflicts. Although the situation in most of the region has improved markedly in the past year, the countries of the region continue to face the arduous task of post-conflict peace-building.

The proliferation of small arms and the use of mercenaries and child soldiers continue to plague the region, negatively affecting the development of the entire region. How to help the countries of the region to extricate themselves once and for all from the vicious circle of conflict and poverty and to embark on the road to peace and development is a long-term challenge facing the region, as well as the international community.

Experience in recent years has shown that the dispatch of a visiting mission is an effective means for the Council to gain further first-hand understanding of the situation in West Africa, as well as to seek possible solutions. Through the joint effort of all parties concerned, this year's mission to the region has achieved its expected goals. The report of the mission (S/2004/525) contains many good recommendations that may help promote the solution of problems in West Africa. Those recommendations therefore deserve to be studied seriously and implemented soon by the Security Council. The useful ideas just proposed by countries that were visited, as well as by other interested countries and organizations, also deserve to be studied by the Council.

The problems in West Africa transcend national borders. Their solution calls for a regional, integrated and comprehensive approach. China appreciates the positive role played by the African Union, the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), the Mano River Union and other regional and subregional organizations in that regard. China supports the ECOWAS idea of establishing a stand-by force. China also welcomes the holding in May of a Mano River Union summit meeting, which we hope will lead to the Union's revitalization. It is necessary that the international community support, and work in

coordination with, those organizations in their efforts, as well as to help the countries of the region to engage in economic development and realize sustainable development in order to tackle the causes of conflict at their roots.

Mr. Siv (United States of America): The Security Council's mission to West Africa was my first visit to the region in five years. I was again struck on the one hand by its enormous potential, with its mineral resources, rich agricultural lands and proud lineage, and, on the other, by its enormous vulnerability and institutional weakness.

The Security Council, the African Union, the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), key regional leaders and troop-contributing countries have made an enormous investment in the nations of West Africa, especially in those that host peacekeeping operations. That investment helps to restore and preserve stability in the region and must be safeguarded. We must move from lip service about the regional dimension of many of West Africa's problems to concrete efforts to coordinate peacekeeping operations and disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programmes.

The Council mission underscored, for me, the importance of geography and the ease with which weapons, mercenaries, displaced populations and destabilizing elements can move across borders. The international community needs to respond to those challenges and assist national Governments to address them as well, if the responses are to be sustainable.

I salute Ambassador Emyr Jones Parry for his outstanding leadership of the mission.

Mr. Mahmood (Pakistan): As this is my first opportunity to do so in a public meeting this month, let me begin by extending our warmest felicitations to you, Sir, on your assumption of the presidency for the month of July. We would also like to commend Ambassador Baja and other members of the delegation of the Philippines for an outstanding job during their presidency in June.

We would like to thank Ambassador Jones Parry for his superb leadership of the mission and for the precision and eloquence with which he articulated the Council's messages to the various interlocutors in West Africa. We are also grateful to the countries of the subregion that the mission visited. The views they expressed today provide crucial input as the Council further deliberates on the issues relevant to them.

The mission to West Africa reaffirmed the value of this instrument at the Council's disposal. It underscored the Council's commitment to Africa. It provided an opportunity to interact directly with the stakeholders, enhance understanding of the ground realities, deepen cooperation with regional and subregional partners, and appreciate first-hand the excellent work being done by the peacekeeping operations, the special representatives of the Secretary-General and other United Nations presences in translating into reality the mandates approved by the Council.

The mission also reaffirmed our belief that, while individual conflict situations require the close attention of the Council, there is a need for a regional approach to address the cross-cutting issues. This is an essential prerequisite for a comprehensive, coherent and integrated approach to all aspects of peace and security. We have no doubt that the mission's wide-ranging recommendations will be systematically followed up.

Allow me now to make a few observations on the individual situations.

In Côte d'Ivoire, Linas-Marcoussis is the agreed road map and its concrete, time-bound implementation remains imperative. Immediate confidence-building measures are required to breach the prevailing gulf of distrust. All Ivorian parties must come together for the unity, long-term stability and development of their country. The regional leaders deserve the Council's commendation for their efforts to help break the political impasse and to find a way forward. We hope that the Accra summit on 29 July will put the peace process firmly back on track.

In Liberia, the deployment of the United Nations Mission there has led to a steady improvement in the security situation, while the implementation of the comprehensive Peace Agreement continues apace. However, notable challenges remain, including an effective reintegration and rehabilitation programme for ex-combatants, as well as economic recovery and reconstruction. In this context, the issue of economic sanctions is important and the Council must revisit it as Liberia makes progress in achieving the benchmarks related to the diamond and timber sectors. Equally

important is the need to redeem the pledges made at the reconstruction conference in February this year.

In Sierra Leone, the United Nations Mission there has contributed enormously to building a solid foundation for peace. The gains are significant, yet fragile in the face of internal challenges and potential external threats. Accelerated progress must be achieved on some key benchmarks, including the building of the armed forces, the extension of State authority and control over the diamond-mining areas. These issues have an important bearing on decisions about the residual presence of the United Nations force.

In Guinea-Bissau, the process of political transition seems firmly on track and the country's leadership resolutely committed to reform. As a typical post-conflict case, stabilization in Guinea-Bissau requires institutional capacity-building and the means to address the long-term economic challenges. The country is about to enter into crucial negotiations with the Bretton Woods institutions. The flexibility and cooperation of international partners are critical in ensuring sustainable peace and economic development.

In the regional context, efforts are under way to address the cross-cutting issues. Special attention must continue to be accorded to stemming the proliferation of small arms, mercenaries and child soldiers. Among the challenges that need to be tackled are the harmonization of demobilization, reintegration and resettlement or repatriation processes throughout West Africa. In this regard, close coordination between various peacekeeping operations and the Governments concerned is critical. The issue of youth unemployment requires urgent attention.

Three countries — Guinea-Bissau, Liberia and Côte d'Ivoire — are scheduled to have elections in 2005. These are significant milestones in their full transition to peaceful and democratic governance. The international community must provide the necessary technical and financial assistance to ensure successful elections.

The leadership role of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) in the subregion is highly commendable. In a relatively short time, ECOWAS has emerged as a reliable partner of the Security Council. It is essential to provide assistance to build the capacity of the ECOWAS secretariat and to help regional States enhance their capacities to deal with the issues of peace and security. Recent efforts to re-energize the Mano River Union also deserve the Council's encouragement and support.

In the larger context, the link between peace and development is most obvious in West Africa. Of the seven peacekeeping operations in the African continent, three are in West Africa. Thirteen of the 15 ECOWAS States are least-developed countries. Sustainable peace and security in the subregion cannot be achieved without social and economic development. The underlying structural causes of conflict — including poverty, hunger, disease, economic underdevelopment and the illegal exploitation of natural resources — must be addressed. While doing so, attention should increasingly turn from conflict management to conflict prevention and resolution. A coherent prevention strategy, developed in cooperation with regional actors, is essential.

Lastly, the need for a comprehensive, coherent and integrated approach by the United Nations system to the complex crises and challenges in Africa is self-evident. The Security Council and the Economic and Social Council are usefully cooperating in addressing the post-conflict situation in Guinea-Bissau. The proposed ad hoc composite committees of the Security Council, the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council could be a useful framework for enhancing system-wide coordination and developing appropriate responses to the challenges of peace and development. The representative of the Netherlands, speaking on behalf of the European Union, called attention to that proposal today, while emphasizing the need for a comprehensive approach. We believe it deserves the serious consideration of the three principal organs.

The President: I thank the representative of Pakistan for his words of appreciation to me and my delegation.

Mr. Llanos (Chile) (*spoke in Spanish*): West Africa is an area of priority concern to the Security Council and the recent Council mission to the region attests to our political interest in its peace and stability. The United Nations has made a great effort in the region to end conflicts and to assist in the processes of post-conflict reconstruction. My delegation welcomes the fact that the Council mission took a regional approach, which alone can guarantee peace and stability in the region.

In the context of the specific characteristics of each country, the Council was able to note that Côte d'Ivoire, Guinea-Bissau, Liberia and Sierra Leone have had positive experiences in the post-conflict phase. All face important electoral processes in the coming months that will enable them freely to choose their own leaders and to participate in their own social and economic development.

The role of the United Nations is to provide assistance and facilitation in order to ensure that every process is sustainable. It cannot replace the endeavours that must be made within each society by all sectors. Furthermore, the United Nations should also prevent potential crises in third countries of the region that are not currently on the Security Council's agenda.

The greatest challenges to regional stability are unquestionably linked to Côte d'Ivoire. The serious difficulties being encountered in the implementation of the Linas-Marcoussis Agreement and the polarization of the country make it vital that solutions be found that preserve its territorial integrity. We are also concerned about the potential repercussions of that crisis on neighbouring countries. We believe that we should support the efforts of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and the meeting to be held in Accra on 29 July.

As noted in the mission's report, in Guinea-Bissau, notwithstanding the progress achieved in the political transition, the general situation is fragile. The Economic and Social Council Ad Hoc Advisory Group has helped Guinea-Bissau to meet its humanitarian and development needs, opening new prospects for United Nations involvement and for cooperation with a country emerging from conflict.

With respect to Liberia and Sierra Leone, the United Nations commitment is evidenced in two important peacekeeping operations with multidimensional mandates. Following the withdrawal of the United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone, to take place late this year, the Organization will maintain a presence in Sierra Leone in order to assist that country in assuming responsibility for its own security. It is important to secure the protection and promotion of human rights. We recognize the specific contributions that can be made by such institutions as the Truth and Reconciliation Commission for Sierra Leone, which has just finished its work. The contribution that such entities can make should be regarded as complementary to the work of the justice system. In Côte d'Ivoire, those responsible for human rights violations should be brought to trial.

The Council mission was able to observe the scale of cross-border problems in the region and the influences at work among countries emerging from conflict. None of them is safe from those influences. For that reason, we believe that there is great need for the Council to continue to treat the regional problems as a single whole.

We believe that the reactivation of the Mano River Union should be encouraged. The recent meeting of heads of State in Conakry is an encouraging sign of that reactivation. The Mano River Union is called upon to play a role in promoting peace and security in the subregion.

I conclude by underlining the role of ECOWAS in promoting peace and its commitment to democracy in the region. The recommendations of the Council's mission identify areas for collaboration between the United Nations and ECOWAS that deserve the support of the international community.

The President: There are no further speakers. The Security Council has thus concluded the present stage of its consideration of the item on its agenda.

The meeting rose at 12.35 p.m.